

COPY.

This is a part of a Report of the Committee of the Privy Council approved by His Excellency the Governor General on the 6th December, 1898.

----- After reviewing the negotiations which the Doukhobors had with the British Government and stating the nature of the People and their thrifty habits and their desirability as citizens, the report says,-

"But as from their religious doctrines they are averse to bearing arms, an exemption which the Russian Government has refused to co ntenance, they have been permitted by the latter to de part from Russia."

"The Minister, under the circumstances, and considering that the Doukhobors would appear to be a most desirable class of settlers to locate upon the vacant lands/Dominion lands in Manitoba and the North West Territories, is of the opinion that it is expedient to give the fullest assurances of absolute immunity from military service in the event of their settling in this country.

"The minister submits that subsection 3 of section 21 of the Militia Act, chapter 41 of the Revised Statutes of Canada, contains the following provision:-

'Every person bearing a certificate from the society of Quakers, Mennonites or Tunkers, and every inhabitant of Canada, of any religious denomination, otherwise subject to military duty, who, from the doctrines of his religion, is averse to bearing arms and refuses personal military service, shall be exempt from such service when balloted in time of peace or war upon such conditions and under such regulations as the Governor in Council from time to time prescribe.'

"The Minister recommends that under the power vested in Your Excellency in Council by the above provision, the doukhobors, upon the production in each case of a certificate of membership from the proper authorities of settling permanently in Canada, be exempted unconditionally, from service in the Militia, upon the production in each case of a certificate of membership from the proper authorities of their community.

"The Committee submit the same for Your Excellency's approval.

(Signed) Rodolphe Boudreau,  
Clerk of the Privy Council.

Stevensville,  
June 22<sup>nd</sup> 1916.

Dear Bro Coffman, I greet-  
you in the precious name of  
Jesus, who died for us that we  
might be saved.

I had the privilege  
of being at your meeting at  
Sherbrooke, and very much  
desired to have a talk with you  
but you were so busy, that I did  
not take the privilege. I then  
spoke to Bro Swannus and got  
your address from him.

I am a member of the Tunkers  
Church have been since I was  
twelve years old

Since you have <sup>2</sup> taken such an interest in our people, I thought it would be interesting for you to know how we have got along. I ~~reported~~ a few days after Ernest Smalms. Bro Gervin Bearss accompanied me. They gave me a farm pass. I took my stand and told ~~him~~ the Commanding Officer that I could not put on the uniform or bear arms he said I could have the pass any way. I reported again in two weeks. I was there from Saturday until Monday.

They said they had no uniform to fit me. I was brought before five officials as to my church and my personal convictions in the morning when I went to object to bearing I was called to the head office and given another pass. In two weeks. At the end of this I reported at Niagara. The officer said that our case was being under consideration and was not finished and gave my self and another young bro a pass for a month. Bro B. Sherk received a

letter from Smyth saying  
 we were only exempt from combat  
 service. A few of our people  
 tried it in the States and when  
 they arrived at the front they were  
 forced in the trenches, at least  
 that's what we have heard.

So you suppose as we stand  
 out here they will force us to  
 England there is a rumor that  
 effect. God has wonderfully  
 delivered me so far and I am  
 trusting him and I know  
 there are a band of Gods people  
 standing behind us with their  
 prayers. But you know we  
 are still human and these  
 anxieties will creep in

5-

They told me I stood a good chance for a pass till fall. If I did not stand a an object, as I am working my father's farm of 155-acres and am the only son.

I do not want to impose on you as I know you are a busy man but wish you could answer this before I will have to report on the 10<sup>th</sup> of July. I mean to be true. No matter what the cost may be. Your Bro

Norman A. Winger  
Stevensville

R. R. No. 2

P.S. It often comes much better for  
The Best way for you to come

Winnipeg Ohio June 23 - 1916 Route 7

Dear Nephew Greeting in Jesus name  
I will try & write you a few lines  
to let you know how we all are getting  
along well we had a prosper<sup>ous</sup> summer  
so far But for the last 2 weeks have  
been dry need rain very much the  
Potatoes are needing it & garden truck  
But at this time it Doesen look much  
for rain yesterday it was very cool  
all most cold & last night we had  
frost But I dont think it did damage  
but the corn in the low lands  
look right Black & some of the sweet  
Potatoes plants nip a little But it did  
not nip anything for us for we are  
up on a side you know I dont know  
whether it hurt the wheat any or not  
but not the wheat is very good here

<sup>this</sup> year Barley & oats hay a  
 little short But a lot of it, corn is  
 looking fine Early Potatoes are looking  
 well also & a lot of them Planted this  
 year. how are the crops with you at this  
 time will you have any fruit in your  
 County this year & what kind of fruit  
 will you have & what will be the  
 prospect of fruit packers this year  
 will you need some or not & at what  
 time of the year can you use them if  
 you need any what is the prospect of  
 day labor or month labor at this time of  
 the year & what are the price per day or  
 per month well Fred the reason I am asking  
 you so many questions I may send Alden  
 out there & of course I want to know how it is  
 how far is it from Buffalo to your place  
 & what would the fare be & for what an  
 excuse would he have to get over are there  
 much snow & how long does harvest last  
 & how long does packing fruit last.

2

I don't think that we will have but a  
 very small per cent of fruit in this  
 County & no cherries at all that I know  
 of & no Peaches at all are any Farms  
 for rent any where near you & how do  
 the People rent & when is the best time  
 to rent in the fall or Spring & what  
 could a fellow get to do doing winter  
 months & if there would not be any Farms  
 to rent in the fall could a fellow get  
 a house to move in until Spring then  
 rent a Farm Sam Jake Bresneman  
 Sherrin & myself have our Properties  
 for sale have them in the land agent  
 Sell as soon as he can & we will give  
 Possession by fall so we must do  
 the next best if we sell & we just want  
 to know something about your County  
 we all want Farms to work



well I believe this all for this time  
if you cant answer all of these questions  
at this time about Farms to rent. let  
me hear at once about work or if  
alder can get work if he was  
to come he may go to Kansas if he  
cant get plenty to do out with you  
I would like to hear By return mail  
if you can make it that quick  
well this evening it feels like we  
would have frost again to night  
but I hope not now Fred dontford  
& let me hear as soon as possible  
this leaves the Swartz Family in  
reasonable health will close  
with Best wishes & Gods Speed

From your uncle John  
Swartz

June 24<sup>th</sup> 1918

Dear Brother - greeting in the Name of the Lord  
 Herewith I enclose copy of leave of absence of  
 one of our boys - I think it is correct I looked  
 over it when I had copied it.

We feel glad and thankful to God for the privileges we  
 enjoy and that our boys are with us again.

I have been to Kitchener last week to hear  
 Brother Derstone evenings June 19 and 21. would  
 have liked very much if he had come to preach at our  
 church also but he said he could not.

Yes I think that our Brethren have all registered  
 We have postponed our conference one day later this  
 week we wanted to have ministers meeting June 25 - conference  
 26 and 27 everything one day later on account of two funerals  
 an aged brother and sister both over 60 years one in Willsley  
 and one in Wilmot. asking you to remember us in your  
 prayer that the Work may prosper that God may  
 direct us and guide us such a way as may be to His  
 Honor and Everlasting Glory  
 yours in faith Jacob R Bender

Vineland Ont June 25th 1918.

Christian Sider,  
Perry Station, Ont.

Dear Brother:- Greeting in the name of the Lord, who saves us by His grace  
Your letter with the news of the return home of your dear son,  
and his companion, William Charlton, came as a very pleasant message.  
May God be praised for their deliverance. Our prayers may often be offered  
up in feebleness, but His power is infinite. He who intercedes at the  
right hand of the Father never fails in receiving the petitions for which  
He asks.

A letter from headquarters at Toronto reports that upon receipt  
of a letter in which was enclosed the certificate of membership of Ernest  
J. Stalm, steps are being taken to grant him leave of absence without pay.  
This is also good news and we hope to hear soon of his return to his  
loved ones. We know that there will be great joy in that home also. And  
we know that the Lord will have some new songs of praise before Him in  
Heaven. But He is worthy of all the praises that Heaven and Earth can  
give Him. He has done great things for us.

May His love overshadow and keep you all. This leaves us in  
usual health. Will be glad to meet you again and will be glad to see the  
terms given to the boys as leave of absence.

Yours in His service,

Vineland Ont., June 25th 1918.

Norman A. Winger,  
Stevensville, Ont. R.R. #2.

Dear Brother:- Greeting in His name who loved us and saved us by His own blood, and whose grace keeps us each day.

Your letter of the 22nd instant received and read with pleasure and also with sympathy. May the Lord deliver you from the power that still retains a claim on your person, for there can be no bondage of the soul for those whom the Lord has set free. There are two things that stand before you which cause you trouble. The first is, the decision of Chief Justice Duff, to which Mr Smythe refers, and the other is, the fact that you are out on a limited leave of absence and may be retained in the army when you again report on the 10th of July.

Regarding the report of Mr. Smythe in his letter to Brother Bert Sherk, His report is based on the decision of the Chief Justice as to the standing of the Tunker Brethren under the Military Service Act. The same opinion has been rendered as to the standing of the Mennonites in Ontario. But this is only an opinion as to the legal status as related to the the present military service law. There has been no provision made for these bodies in that law except that which is stated in the schedule of exemptions which they are given "exemption from combatant service" as adherents of churches "whose faith forbids their engaging in 'combatant' service." The schedule of "exceptions" grants total exemption to the Russians and to the Doukhobors. We tried to claim that the regulations which applied to the Russians applied also to us, since we too were Mennonites. The Tunker brethren also tried to claim freedom from all military service, since they had enjoyed the privileges of the Statutes which formerly gave total exemption to Quakers, Mennonites and Tunkers, and which statutes were the grounds upon which the Russian Mennonites and Doukhobors received their total exemptions. The Military Service Council decided in the favor of the Mennonites and Tunkers, by saying that they were in the same class as the Russians, and, on account of the nature of their faith should have the same privileges and be classed as those excepted from the Act. It seems that the military representatives took exception to this rendering and had the matter brought before the Chief Justice. This was the outcome also of the exemption claims which our Non-resistant bodies had made for our boys. We asked them to appeal from the decisions of the Local Tribunals, because they granted the only exemption from Combatant service. We appealed to the District Tribunals and got the same verdict. Some of them appealed to the Central Appeal Tribunal, which was the Chief Justice, and the interpretation which he placed on the Act was, that the Act granted to us only exemption from Combatant service, and that we would be expected to do Non-combatant service. The fact is recognized that we should have been included in the Exceptions to the Act. But, as the Act now stands by act of Parliament, it cannot be changed or amended except by Parliament. There can not even be an Order in Council passed giving us complete exemption, since the Act is a law and to grant us complete exemption would be contrary to the law and to its legal interpretation as decided by the Chief Justice. There is now no course open to us but to seek relief through the military department. This has been arranged for by the special committee with which we have been dealing. The Decision of Chief Justice Duff has nothing to do with this special arrangement. The plan which is now working is such, because of the Decision of the Chief Justice. His decision in no way effects the leave of absence which is granted to our people in case they are called upon to report for service.

Vineland Ont., June 25th 1918.

D. W. Heise,  
Gormley Ont.

Dear Brother:- Greeting.

Your letter and enclosures received and noted. It is with some surprise that I note the duties assigned you servant, but I am glad that I find myself willing to be of some use, and, as occasion may require and opportunity be given it shall be my pleasure to be used of the Master in any cause that is worthy of His name and which will bring some blessing to His children.

You will find enclosed a revision of the form of letter sent me. I do not think that anything more extensive is needed. It covers the ground as to Object, Delays, Present outlook, and appeal, and that is all that is needed: It is the Spirit alone that can put the willingness into the hearts of men. All that is now needed is to affix the names of the officers and give directions as to the sending of the money to the treasurer.

I would be glad to have your version of the reason that the Chief Justice has not recognized the Funker Church as entirely exempt from military service. He has classed the Mennonites in the same manner, holding that they are free from combatant service only. I have a letter from a brother in the West, who says that the Registrar in their district has granted complete exemption to their members, and signs their certificates of membership which contains a statement to that effect. The Russian brethren are claiming exemption for their children who are members of Mennonite families but not members of the Church, while our people are allowed exemption only for the members of the Church. There is so much discrepancy in the opinions of the officers of the Government that it is impossible to say what is the right opinion. But it is probably best at the present to be quiet and let them work out that question among themselves while we pray the Lord to direct them in their decisions, and give them all the information concerning our faith that we can.

It seems that the Officers are recognizing the signatures of your Bishops after all. Word has come to me that Earl Sider and Wm. Charlton are at home. A letter, a copy of which is enclosed, will explain itself. I hope that the same attention will be given the claims of the rest of the boys who are still detained, either in prison or in camp.

Yours in faith,

Vineland Ont , June 25th  
1918.

L. J. Burkholder,  
Markham Ont.

Dear brother@- Greeting. Your letter of the 24th instant received and noted. The same will have my attention at once.

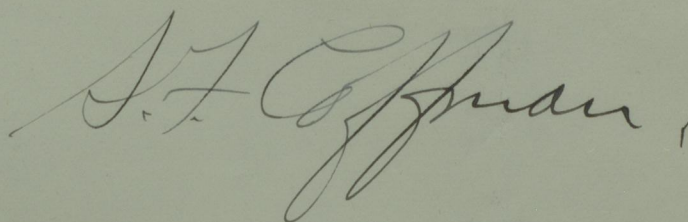
You will find enclosed a copy of official letter relative to the case of one of the young Tunker brethren who was sentenced by court martial to two years and who has been detained in the Jail at St Catharines. This appears to be an evidence that the Government is giving recognition to the claims of the Tunker brethren and will continue to grant the liberty from military service that we have asked for.

There are still a few cases that will need attention.

As far as I know there are now no members of the Mennonite or Amish Churches in detention. There are some appeal cases yet in progress, but they will not interfere with the plans to secure relief from service. There are some important matters in progress in the West, as soon as I hear more regarding them and have time I will write you more fully, it pertains to the claims that the Russians are putting forth for the recognition of their sons who are not members of the Church. Our people are securing complete exemption for those who are members.

Hope you are all well. I received a load of hay from VClayton this morning, and Father High helped put it in the barn. You had better get the typewriter some time when you are over. I would like to show you a little how to manage the thing.

Yours in faith,



Vineland Ont., June 25th 1918.

Isaac Swalm,  
Duntroon Ont.

Dear Brother:- Greeting in the Name of Him Who loved us and gave His life For us. How much more will He not also freely give us all things.

Last week I visited Ernest in St. Catharines. I had a pleasant visit with him in the presence of Mr Bush. I know that he is receiving the best of attention and has the sympathy of the Governor of the institution. Mr. Bush says that the conscientious objectors are the best lot of prisoners he has ever had in his care. They are quiet and obedient and have their devotions every Sunday. They are also a good influence over the other prisoners that come in, since they are so quiet and do not curse and swear it helps to keep the others from using such profane and loud and unbecoming language. So the good effects are as great as the hardships, after all. Even Caesar's household received the gifts of salvation by having Paul the prisoner in their keeping.

Ernest asked Mr. Bush to get me the certificate that Brother Baker gave him on the occasion of your visit to him, and Mr. Bush found it in Ernest's belongings and gave it to me. I sat down at once and wrote a letter to the Officer Commanding District #2, and asked him to accept it and take steps to release Ernest. Yesterday evening I received a letter as follows:-

To S.F. Coffman,  
Vineland Ont.

#D3109171 Pte. E.F. Swalm,  
1st Depot Battn., 2nd C.O.R.

Your letter of the 20th instant enclosing certificate in regard to the marginally named man has been received at this office.

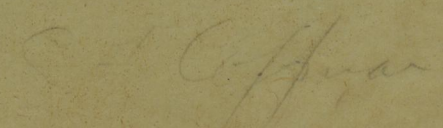
The necessary steps will be taken to grant this man leave of absence without pay.

(Signed) R.C. Whidiger,  
Lieut. Colonel,  
for A.A.G., M.D. No. 2.

This official notice seems to indicate that the signatures of the Tunker bishops are to be recognized. A letter from Bro. Chr. Sider says that Earl Sider and William Charlton have returned home. We should praise the Lord again for taking thought of His little ones. I hope that you will soon be able to receive into the heart of your family the dear son whom the Lord loves and has spared and returns to you. May His grace be sufficient to keep and bless him in a new service and testimony for His Master.

Will be glad for any further word concerning him. This leaves us all well and enjoying His blessings of grace and salvation.

Yours in faith,



C O P Y.

---

M I L I T I A   A N D   D E F E N C E

149 College St. Toronto, June 25 th, 1918.

No 2 M.D.34-3-195-4  
vol 3

To Mr. D. W. Heise,  
Gormley. Ont.

Your letter of the 24 th instant in regard to the release of members of the Tunker Church, has been received at this Office and I beg to inform you that action has already taken on the following cases.

John H Heise.  
Charles Wright.  
Clarence Fisher.  
✓ Alvin Winger.  
✓ Wm Charleton  
✓ Earl Sider.  
✗ E. J. Swalm.  
✓ Alvin Broughton.

R. C. Windeyer.

Lieut- Colonel, for  
A.A.G, M.D. No 2



Vineland Ont., June 26th, 1918.

Edward Cober,  
Kitchener, Ont.,  
R.R. #2.

Dear Brother:- Greeting in the name of the Master, Jesus.

Since there has been some question as to the reading of the Leave of absence given to our brethren who have been released from military service, I am asking you for a report of your leave of absence.

Please tell me the following:-

- 1st. In the first paragraph of your certificate, following the words, "without pay", does your certificate say "until further orders." If not, what does it say?
- 2nd. Below your signature on the same page, after "on the following grounds," does it state, "Religious grounds" or "As a member of the Tunker Church" or what does it say?

We are anxious that the same character of leave is granted to all of the brethren. We rejoice that so many of them are released and pray that those who are still in the prisons will also be able to rejoin their loved ones who are waiting for them at home.

Yours in faith,

Vineland Ont., June 26th, 1918.

John Swartz,  
Lima Ohio, R.R. #7.

Dear Uncle and Family:- Greeting in the name of the Lord who loved us and gave Himself for us.

Your letter was received and glad to hear from you and to learn that all are so well and getting along well. But I am sorry to learn of conditions that make it so hard for people to live and enjoy the blessings of peace which are so dear to us and to all man. May the Lord soon turn the tide of events so that we may again enjoy with all men the return of the spirit of love and faith and confidence of man toward man, and the obedience of <sup>all</sup> to the Gospel of Christ our Saviour.

It would be indeed a pleasure to me to offer some encouragement to you and answer your requests with confidence. But I fear that I will not be in a position to make any promises with any degree of assurance on account of conditions as they now stand in the relation of the two countries toward each other. There is a condition of peace, for which we should thank God and pray that it may long continue. But there are also some agreements which make it difficult for us to have the interchange of relationships that we would enjoy. I am enclosing you a slip cut from yesterday's paper which will explain one condition. There would be no possibility of any one's avoiding military service by coming to this country. The agreement is based upon the idea that there are those from each country who have gone to the other for the purpose of evading the power of the Draft Laws which each country has passed for the enforcing of the military service laws. This is true. There were many who left Canada at the time that the recent Draft Law was being prepared. The borders were then closed to all young men of military age, and all others had to receive special permission or present credentials showing that they are not of military age or above it. Those who were of military age had to have passes given to them from Military authority, and were subject to recall in case they failed to report at the proper time. The same condition holds good concerning those who desire to come into Canada from the United States. The only hope that I could offer you as to having Alden come to Canada would be that you see a Canadian consul at some Port of Entry, and I think that you will find one at Lima, and make arrangements with him about getting Alden into Canada under a special pass. If he should attempt to come under any possible excuse there would be grave danger of his being turned back at the lines or being held on the pretense of desertion from military service.

Settlers will have no trouble coming into the country. But under those circumstances it would be necessary to arrange with the Canadian government for entry as settlers. Such persons would be able to bring their families with them and have no difficulty. There is plenty of work to do for all classes of people. The labor question is grave enough on account of so many young men having been called from the city and country. Farm help is especially scarce. Wages are good, from \$2 to \$2.50 and \$3.00 per day. The fruit crop is not as heavy as some years. The Strawberries are a light crop, the Peaches a third of a crop and the Cherries are only about half a crop. The severe winter was hard on them Apples seem to be a good crop. The farm crops are very good so far, although the weather has been very cool, and the corn is very small yet.

There are always farms for sale, but there is just now a particular situation, on account of parents wanting to get exemption for their sons many people have been buying more land and locating their sons on farms in order to claim exemption for them as farmers. This has taken a good many farms off of the market, but there are others that can be secured.

Fruit land is from \$300 - \$1000 per acre, according to improvements. Farm lands are from \$40 - \$100 per acre according to improvements and location. The prices of produce are good at this time, about the same as you have there. And the cost of living is also as high. We are so close to the States that there is very little difference in such things. In case the boys think of coming to Canada they had better come over and see how things are, and it would be advisable for them to come before they dispose of their farms there, and of their homes. We have very favorable conditions here in many respects, but conditions are so peculiar that no one can get an idea of it without seeing it for themselves.

I would be very glad if some of our people could come and settle with us in this district. It is one of the oldest settlements in Canada and while we have a comparatively small congregation here we feel that there is room for us to grow and we have hearts that are warm toward those of our brethren and sisters who would desire to make their homes with us.

Some time ago I had a letter from Clyde from Kansas. He wanted information about the conditions in Canada and I wrote him giving explanations as best I could. But I also asked him to come and see conditions for himself first. A great many of our brethren are expecting to go to the North West Canada in the coming fall and perhaps next Spring. Many expect to go from Pennsylvania and from other Eastern districts. David Garber expects to go West from his home in Virginia. The West is fine in many respects, but there are also draw-backs in that country. The land is very cheap, and the crops good, when they are good, but the seasons are more uncertain there than in other districts. There is not such a good opportunity to engage in general or mixed farming as in the eastern districts.

I may not have answered all of your questions, but would be glad to give you all the information possible. There are questions that I know I could not answer satisfactorily. Business in general is good in Canada. Many things are favorable, but we cannot tell at what moment things might be greatly changed. We have been enjoying many favors from the Government but even those conditions are subject to change. Many of our brethren are now at home under leave of absence only, but it is for an indefinite time and under the promise that no service will be required of them. It is only through constant effort on the part of the Churches of the Non-resistant faith and the providences of the Lord that we have received and we trust may be able to retain these privileges. There are some complications that will need to be adjusted later, regarding the privileges that are enjoyed by the Russian section of the Church and what is granted to us. But we will wait until the troubles are quieted down before we take up these matters with the Government.

We hope that you are all well. Our love is sent to the family. May the Lord direct you way. We will do all that we can for you at any time. Vineland is 20 miles West of Suspension Bridge N.Y. on the Grand Trunk Railway, Between Suspension Bridge N.Y. and Hamilton Ont.

Yours in faith and love,

*D. C. Pappan*

Vineland Ont., June 26th 1918.

Jacob R. Bender:  
Tavistock Ont.

Dear Brother:- Greeting in the name of Jesus.

Your letter and the Copy of th Leave of Absence received. Was glad to get a copy of the paper, since it give a better of idea of the standing in which the Government holds those of our brethren who are called to register and apply for leave. They are virtually soldiers, and are only excused from actual service on account of their religious belief. This is practically exemption, but it comes from the Army Department instead of from the Government. But this is nothing different than the position in which we are placed by the "proclamation" which calls all citizens soldiers from the date of its issue and until they are called or exempted. The only way in which the conditions can be changed now is by an act of Parliament which recognizes us and excludes us from all service and does not make us subject to the call to service. But, this is scarcely a proper time to raise this question on account of the bitter opposition on the part of many.

I hope that you will have a good Conference, and that the Lord will be in your midst to bless you and prosper the cause of love and harmony and bring an increase of faith and power for His service. We pray for you in the work. With kind remembrances of the family and best wishes to all, and asking an interest in your prayers, I am,

Yours in faith,

Vineland Ont., June 26th, 1918.

Irvin Weber,  
Kitchener, Ont.

My Dear Friend and Brother;

Since our conversation over the phone I have wondered very much how you got along with the Tribunal at Kitchener. I was not aware that there were any more cases to be brought up before the Local Tribunals. This must have been an appeal case. I hope that you got along all right. There is a possibility that the case was decided like many others have been, - "Exempt from Combatant service only, on account of religious belief."

There have been various rulings on this point as applied to the Mennonite people. Some officials have said the our people come under the same classification as do the Russian Mennonites. Others maintain that the Order in Council of 1873 was a special agreement with the Russian immigrants only. This would leave no place for other religious denominations under the Act except the privilege of exemption allowed for religious belief, and the law provides no exemption save that noted above, - from combatant service only. The persons who framed the law seem not to have understood the position which the Mennonites and Tunkers hold with regard to military service, and hence the confusion that has existed. If the Government desired to fully recognize the faith of well organized and established religious bodies, it would be easy to classify us and the Tunker brethren according to the spirit of the Act. But there are so many persons who oppose all exemptions for religious reasons that such a classification is opposed and hence we are getting only what the letter of the law allows. We are glad, however that other provisions are being made for us through the very channels into which some have desired to force us, - through the military organization. They have forced us in and the military officers seems rather satisfied that by some arrangement we are forced out. There have been but few cases, as far as my observation goes, where the boys have accepted any kind of service. Only a few, and they are of the Tunker Church, are still retained in the camps, and they are cases that have received trial by court martial and have received their sentences and are now in jail or prison. The fact that these boys have refused all military service, makes them useless and undesirable in the military organizations. Upon those grounds they are now being given an indefinite leave of absence as soon as they report for service. Only yesterday I met one of the boys who had been released from the guard house and sent home because he would not comply with orders to train or labor as a soldier in the camp. The release of these men is an arrangement that has been made for us through the members of parliament whom we have approached with reference to our exemption and the Military authorities at Ottawa. Orders have been issued by the Heads of the Military Department at Ottawa, to all Commanding Officers in the 1st and 2nd Districts to grant leave of absence to all Mennonites and Tunkers upon their presenting Certificates signed by their Bishops, when they are called to report.

Regarding adherents of the Church, there is now no question with the Military Department. If these persons have been attending the Mennonite Church and have since proven their faith in the doctrines of the Church by making application for membership and actually joining the Church, they are considered as bona fide members. It seems rather strange proceedings for a Government to oblige a man to show what his real faith is, but it is only bringing a man to a true profession of what is in his heart. There are times when such tests come in some form, military or otherwise.

I would have been glad to have had you and Urias make a trip down to talk over matters, but I considered that it would not gain you anything and would have wasted your time as far as helping out the situation is concerned. The only documentary evidence that I have, is the decision of the Military Service Council which is in the hands of the Bishops, but which the Tribunals in General have refused to acknowledge. They have always reported that Chief Justice Duff rules that the Mennonites are not in the Exceptions and are hence exempt from combatant service only. This is the position of Chief Justice Duff. Others hold the opposite opinion, and thus we are left stranded on the rocks of uncertainty. The other Documents which I hold are those, a copy of which Mr Weichel also holds, regarding the release of Mennonites from service when drafted. This will grant one who is called to report the privilege of indefinite leave.

I do not know in which class you are placed. If your case has only come up for decision concerning your appeal for exemption, you are safe enough to hold the decision of the Tribunal, as exempting you from combatant service only. When you are called to report, you will need only to present your certificate of Membership, and your Leave of absence will be given you. In any case now, your Certificate of Membership is your claim for release and your protection from military service.

It may be that the decisions of the Military authority regarding the release of the Mennonites and Tunkers will change. In that case the whole question will again be thrown open and the Church will be required to go over the whole matter with the Government. In that case, I think that we have now sufficient evidence of the righteousness of our claims and the evidence of precedents on the part of the Government in its attitude toward other Churches of a similar faith as ours that we will be able to make our case sufficiently strong to either gain our plea or cause the Government to overrule all other pledges and allow no exemptions for religious reasons and that would be equivalent to religious oppression or the denial of constitutional liberties to citizens of Canada. It seems strange to us that we should be accused of cowardice and disloyalty on account of our not desiring to participate in war. The conscience which we have is not of natural inclinations. It is a conscience that is formed by the Holy Spirit and to Him we are responsible for keeping a good conscience toward God. Men have no more right to interfere with us in our worship and our belief than they have to interfere with any other Church or its Doctrines. Governments are not made to set religious standards, but to protect and perpetuate the interests, lawful interests of all of its citizens, regardless of their religious beliefs, so long as their lives are consistent with the principles of peace and humanity, and no one will say that our doctrines of peace and good will to all men are unlawful.

Our best wishes are with you and may God bless you in the stand that you have taken and may you have much pleasure in your faith and life in the service and testimony for Christ and his Kingdom of Peace. I will be glad to have a report of your case with the Tribunal. Best wishes to all.  
Yours in faith,

*S. J. Coffman*

Greenwood, Del.,

6/26/18

Dear Brother Coffman:-

Believing that we are in a time when united prayer is helpful to the maintenance of God's people, we aim to send a letter to every Amish and Mennonite congregation, as given in the year book. To call to remembrance the privilege of using the 4th of July as a day of prayer and thanks.

Will you ask your members to assemble or in private, bow in humble prayer and implore His blessings and guidance, Members of the Greenwood, A. M. congregation.

Vineland Ont., June 26th, 1918.

J. W. Heise, Sec.  
Gornley Ont.

Dear Brother:- Greeting.

Last evening Brother John Sider and The Brethren Winger and Teal, returned from a trip to the Barracks at Niagara and were accompanied by Brother Alvin Winger who had been detained there as a soldier in uniform for nearly two months. It seems that his papers were at hand and the only excuse was that he had no clothes and it took too long to make out the papers. They had taken the precaution to take a suit for him and waited patiently for the routine of the papers. Bro. Alvin was then released from the Guard house and told that he was a free man, and there was a happy father there to meet him and take him home.

At the request of Bro. Girvan Winger I have today written the D.O.C., at Toronto asking if further credentials are required for the brethren Chas. H. Wright and John H. Heise, in order to secure their release. I took the liberty of making this request as appointed by the Committee, and gave that as my credentials. Things seem to be moving, if slowly. Perhaps we need to be a little more patient. Inquiry was made as to Ernest Swalm, and no notice has been sent yet concerning his release.

Yours in faith,

*A. H. Swalm*



Vineland Ont., June 26th, 1918.

Colonel H. C. Pickford, D. O., C.  
Military District #2,  
149 College St.,  
Toronto, Ont.

Sir:

In order to avoid confusion and misunderstanding of reports in correspondence with officials, the Committee of the Mennonite and Tunker Churches has appointed the undersigned to act as their representative.

In the cases of Charles H. Wright, of Perry Sta, Ont., Co. E, 2nd Battalion, Exhibition Camp,

and John Henry Heise, of Richmond Hill Ont, also in 2nd Battalion, Exhibition Camp,

both of whom were tried by court martial and now imprisoned at Burwash as conscientious objectors, kindly inform me, if possible, whether further credential are needed from the Tunker Church of which both are members in order to secure their release from prison and their Leave of Absence in accord with the agreement with the Military Department for Mennonites and Tunkers?

Since there has been no recent report on these cases the information is asked for.

Thanking you for the recent favors granted us, I am,

Yours Respectfully,

*S. J. Coffey*  
For the Committee.

M.F.B. 440.

PLEASE QUOTE REFERENCE NUMBER ~~100~~

In reply please quote

MILITIA AND DEFENCE.

No. \_\_\_\_\_

149 College Street,

TORONTO. 27th June, 191<sup>8</sup>.

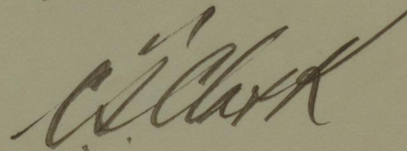
Mr. S. F. Coffman,  
Vineland. Ontario.

Dear Sir,-

I am in receipt of your letter dated 26th June, regarding the case of Charles H. Wright, of Perry, Ontario; and John Henry Heise, Richmond Hill, Ontario, and am passing it on to Lt-Col. Windeyer, who deals with these matters.

I have requested him to advise you what has been done in the matter.

Yours truly,



Captain.

for Colonel. Commanding M.D.No.2.

C. LESSLIE WILSON,  
ONTARIO REGISTRAR

A. F. BARR,  
H. E. MACHELL,  
ASSISTANT REGISTRARS

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE  
MILITARY SERVICE BRANCH

OFFICE OF ONTARIO REGISTRAR

UNDER MILITARY SERVICE ACT

BOARD OF TRADE BUILDING

TORONTO,  
ONTARIO June 27th, 1918

Bishop S. F. Coffman,  
Vineland, Ont.

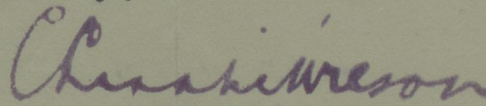
Dear Sir;

The Central Appeal Judge has now ruled that Tunkers and Ontario Mennonites are not excepted from the Military Service Act. Therefore all members and adherents of the Church born since 1882 and now 19 years of age, and in the future as they become 19 years of age, must register under the Act. When their cases come to be dealt with they may raise whatever claims for exemption either from full service or combatant service as they may be advised.

You had better see that all the persons in your congregation coming within the above description registers at once, if they have not already done so.

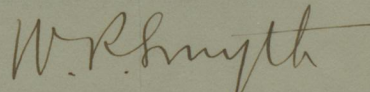
In view of what has passed between us, I venture to again call your attention to the advisability of the members of your community holding a conference with a view to seeing whether you cannot see your way to make a compromise on the subject of non-combatant service with Hospital Corps or other non-combatant units. With the example of your brethren during the Napoleonic Wars and during the American Civil War, it seems to me that you should find some better use for your young men than having them sent to prison.

Yours truly,



ONTARIO REGISTRAR.

Per.



Chief Public Representative.

WRS-M.

Vineland Ont., June 27th 1918.

Bishop Christian Zehr,  
Wellesley, Ont.

Dear Brother:- Greeting.

A letter signed by yourself and Bro. Christian S. Zehr, came to hand las week. I am not sure who sent it, and so will acknowledge the receipt to you. There was some uncertainty about sending in the names of the brethren who are in the military age of class 1, and some have sent me the lists and some have sent the lists to Mr. Weichel and some to the Ontario Registrar and others have sent no lists at all. There has been no cal for them as yet, and I am holding them until some notice is sent out, which I am not expecting very soon if at all. All the Brethren who had been called are now released, excepting three Tunker Brethren who were court-martialed and two are in prison at Burwash and one in St. Catharines jail. We have the promise that the latter one will be released and have written to learn what the purpose of the authorities concerning the other two. We certainly should thank the Lord for the way in which we have been spared from these trials. May the Lord lead us in all things to do His will and serve Him truly and Keep His Word with all diligence.

It will be well for our people to work quietly along, without making too much over the matter of our freedom. there are many adversaries, and they are watching to know what privileges are given to our people. They will bring ef ry power to bear against our exemptions if possible to cancel what has been granted us. We need yet to watch and pray.

Yours in faith;

*S. F. Coffman*

Millbank June 27/18

Mr. S. F. Coffman:

Dear Sis.

Find enclosed money order  
of \$21.45. being a small reward  
for your kindness, showed and  
trouble you are having. from  
N. Hafziger's church. A. Mennonite  
Mornington.

Yours

Jacob L. Wagler  
Deacon

Millbank Ont.

COPY.

OFFICE OF ONTARIO REGISTRAR,  
Under Military Service Act.

Toronto Ont. June 27th, 1918.

Bishop S. F. Coffman,  
Vineland Ont.

Dear Sir:

The Central Appeal Judge has ruled that Tunkers and Ontario Mennonites are not excepted from the Military Service Act.. Therefore all members and adherents of the Church born since 1882 and now 19 years of age, and in the future as they become 19 years of age, must register under the Act. Whenther their cases come to be dealt with they may raise whatever claims for exemption either from full service or combatant service as they may be advised.

You had better see that all the persons in your congregation coming within the above description register at once, if they have not already done so.

In view of what has passed between us, I venture to again call your attention to the advisability of your community holding a conference with a view of seeing whether you cannot see your way clear to make a compromise on the subject of non-combatant service with Hospital Corps or other non-combatant units. With the example of your brethren during the Napoleonic Wars and during the American Civil war, it seems to me that you should find some better use for your young men than having them sent to prison.

Yours truly,

(Signed) G. Leslie Wilson,  
Ontario Registrar.

Per. (Signed) W. R. Smyth,  
Chief Public Representative.

WRS/M.

Elida Allen co. O. June 27<sup>th</sup> 1918

S. F. Goffman  
Winchester Ont.

Dear Bro

Fraternal Greetings

I wish to write to you for information regarding the crossing over of one of our families here to your country. The family consists of the Parents both members of our Church 6 Boys 1 Girl. The oldest Boy also a member was 20 last Aug. The next one not a member was 19 last April. The 3<sup>rd</sup> one a member was 17 " March and so on down. The Parents age is 42 & 41.

They wish to know whether they could get through to Canada with their family via Detroit, on what conditions. None of the boys have registered but one will soon be required to do so if they remain here and for other

reasons they are thinking of making  
 the change and you know it is too  
 big an undertaking to start without  
 pretty good assurance that they could  
 get through the thought likely you  
 could give the information they  
 need for the occasion

If you possibly can answer this  
at once and send the answer to  
 me as they live nearby He is a  
 brother to Bro<sup>Pres</sup> George Cass of  
 La Junta Colo,

Could the 19 yr. boy who is not  
 a member come through with the  
 others and any other information you  
 can give I will be thankfully  
 recd.

J. M. Shenk  
 Eldon O.



(3)

The Brother that wrote the letter did not understand that the boy that is expected to be taken into the church before we leave here if we can get through and farther if our people are disrupted and if so if that will continue or not

Bish. J. R. Zook, *Chairman*

Bish. C. N. Hostetter, *Secretary*

Eld. S. G. Engle, *Treas.*

Bish. J. N. Hoover

Eld. J. L. Heisey, *Asst. Sec.*

Eld. J. M. Sheets

Eld. D. W. Heise

Matt. 28. 19-20

Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, *even* unto the end of the world.  
Amen.

Matt. 9. 37-38

Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest.

Foreign Mission Board of The Brethren in Christ Church



Gormley June 27 th, 1918

S. F. Coffman .

Vineland, Ont.

Dear Brother. ----- GREETING -----

I am in receipt of your communications both of the 25 , and 26 th inst. And I am inclosing you copy of two letters which speak for themselves.

We are truly grateful to our kind heavenly Father for His goodness to usward, notwithstanding our unworthiness. And what has already been accomplished, gives us faith to look for yet greater things from His divine hand.

It is truly a matter of rejoicing to learn of release of those of our men who were in detention for so long, and while no word has yet been received as to the release of the Brethern, Swalm, Wright, Heise, and Fisher. yet I am confident that Col Windeyer will fulfil his promis to us, but of course some of the s e things work out slow.

The Circular letter as revised by you, will be forwarded to Bro Goudie for his endorsment, I shall then complete it, and soon as I learn from the different Bodies as to the number required, will have them printed, and sent out.

I plede guilty of "plagiarism" having omitted to say in my last letter that my draft in part was copied from one of your former communications to Mr, Caulder. I beg your Pardon.

In the event of no inteligence arriving in a few days regarding those of our men who are not yet liberated, I shall be after the matter, and follow it up until we succeed.

Very Sincerely Yours.

*D. W. Heise*

Vineland Ont., June 27th 1918.

Hon. F. S. Scott, M. P.  
Galt Ont.

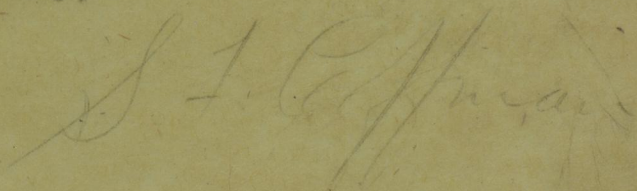
Dear Sir:-

We are glad to report that matters are running fairly smoothly at the present time. As far as I am aware now, there are none of the boys detained in any of the camps. One is still held in the St. Catharines jail, but I have received notice from the Officer Commanding, Col. Bickford, That steps have been taken to secure his release. The two boys who were sent to Burwash are among these for whose release application had been made, but not having heard from their cases for some time, we addressed a letter of inquiry to Col. Bickford yesterday.

The enclosed copy of Minutes of the Relief Organization may be of interest to you. Steps are now being taken to raise the funds for the Memorial to the Government. Any information or instructions that you may be able to give us as to the donation to the Government or the use by the Government of this fund will be appreciated at any time. Between sessions is a bad time to do business, but we will try and be ready by the time Parliament meets agin.

Thanking you for your many favors, I am,

Yours truly,



Waterloo, Ont., June 27, 1918.

Reverend F. S. Coffman,  
Vineland, Ont.

Dear Sir:

I am in receipt of the following letter from Military Headquarters, London, Ont. and deemed it advisable to acquaint you with the situation as it exists to-day.

London, Ont., June 25/18.

Mr. W. G. Weichel,  
Waterloo, Ont.

Dear Mr. Weichel:

Replying to your favor of June 24th, as I understand it, these men should report in writing a few days before their leave expires for a renewal and their renewal will then be made.

Yours truly,  
H. W. Smith,  
Lieut. Colonel,  
a/G. S. O., M. D. No. 1.

This letter was sent to me in answer to a query of mine regarding the advisability of your young men complying with the demands on the document granting them leave of absence, which stated that men being granted leave of absence should report on Jan. 1st, April 1st, July 1st, and Oct. 1st. of each year. To do this personally would entail considerable expense and cause considerable inconvenience and the copy of letter I have written you will explain the situation for the future. One thing is certain, every man who is ordered to report for duty must do so and if he gets to London should report at the Armouries for medical examination. If this has been done he presents himself before his Commanding Officer and hands him the letter containing the certificate signed by the Bishop of your church, whereupon the lad is granted leave of absence for an indefinite period. This may take several days and some times a week has passed by, but this should not occasion alarm in the minds of those who are seeking leave of absence for themselves as everything will come out alright in the end. The delay is caused by the arrival of so many hundreds of men daily and each man must await his turn.

Hoping this is satisfactory, I remain

Yours very truly,

